

REMARKS

In the Office Action of November 22, 2005, the Examiner required election between claims 1-51 and claims 52-64. Such election had been preliminarily made via telephone on November 15, 2005, by the undersigned. Applicant hereby affirms that verbal election and cancels claims 52-64.

Applicants submit that independent claim 1 is generic to the three embodiments shown in FIGS. 37-46, not just FIGS. 40-43. Applicants do agree that independent claim 52 is drawn to FIGS. 44-46 only.

In the Office Action of November 22, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 5, 9-11, 28, 32, 36 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Raque (U.S. Patent No. 5,697,490). The Examiner also rejected claims 1, 13-17, 19-28, 37-42, and 44 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by DeGreef (U.S. Patent No. 6,742,647). The Examiner stated that claims 2-4, 6-8, 12, 18, 29-31, and 33-35 were allowable and further stated that claims 45-51 were allowed.

In this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, 6, 28, 29, and 33, and cancelled claims 52-64, all without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, claims 1-51 are pending. Claims 1, 28, 45, and 48 are independent claims.

Applicants have amended claim 1 so that it recites a conveyor suitable for conveying objects along a transport direction, the conveyor including, for example, a plurality of connected links, each having a body, a cam follower member, at least two opposed gripping members, and a gear drive mechanism including a double rack and pinion arrangement interconnecting the cam follower member and the gripping members. The cam follower member is movable to selectively move the gripping

members between a first position and a second position via the gear drive mechanism. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references do not disclose or suggest such subject matter.

As shown in FIGS. 37-46, each of the three embodiments therein include one form or another of a double rack and pinion arrangement. FIG. 39 shows an exploded view of a rack and pinion arrangement having a single pinion portion and two rack portions; FIGS. 43 and 45 show a double rack and pinion arrangement having two pinion portions and two rack portions.

DeGreef does not disclose or suggest a gear drive mechanism including a double rack and pinion arrangement interconnecting a cam follower member and gripper members, as recited. Instead, DeGreef discloses slideable grippers without any gear mechanism of any type.

Raque discloses pivotably movable elements 110 and 112 with a number of teeth 150, 152 therebetween so as to allow gear-like pivoting about axels 128. However, such structure does not comprise a rack and pinion arrangement, nor a double rack and pinion arrangement, as recited.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references. Applicants accordingly request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1 and claims 2-27 dependent thereon.

Claim 28 recites a link for a conveyor, wherein the link includes a gear drive mechanism including a double rack and pinion arrangement interconnecting a cam follower member and at least two opposed gripping members. For the reasons given above regarding claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 28 is also patentable

over the cited references. Applicants therefore request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 28 and claims 29-44 dependent thereon.

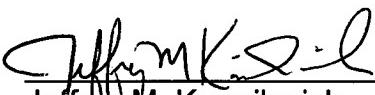
In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of the pending Application, and timely allowance of all pending claims.

The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at his convenience to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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